

**City of Reading City Council  
Regular Business Meeting  
Monday, September 24, 2012**

Council President Francis G. Acosta called the meeting to order.

The invocation was given by Michael Kaucher from the Reading Berks Conference of Churches.

All present pledged to the flag.

**ATTENDANCE**

Council President Acosta  
Councilor Corcoran, District 1  
Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz, District 2  
Councilor Sterner, District 3  
Councilor Marmarou, District 4  
Councilor Reed, District 5  
Councilor Waltman, District 6  
Managing Director C. Snyder  
City Auditor D. Cituk  
City Solicitor C. Younger  
City Clerk L. Kelleher

**PROCLAMATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS**

City Council issued the following:

- Council Commendation recognizing Compadres Network, accepted by Eddie Moran
- Council Commendation recognizing Latin Flair, accepted by Wanda Holdren

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Council President Acosta announced that there are seven (7) citizens registered to address Council on non-agenda matters. He inquired if any Councilor objected to suspending the rule requiring non-agenda comment at the end of the Council meeting. As no one objected, the rule to require non-agenda comment at the end of the meeting was suspended. Council President Acosta reminded the citizens registered to speak about the remaining public speaking rules.

**Bill Woolworth, of Holly Road**, expressed his belief in the beauty of Reading and noted the many challenges business owners face in Reading. He expressed the belief that customers do

not want to come into downtown Reading for various reasons. He noted the need for the City to work with business owners to correct this problem. He also suggested adopting less punitive measures that are friendlier to business owners. He suggested making modifications to City laws and regulations.

**Shirley Seiders, of Heckman's Court**, stated that she owns a duplex on Heckman's Court. She stated that she resides in one of the residences and keeps the other side of the duplex vacant. She stated that the rental inspection fee is too high. She stated that investors and landlords are being squeezed out due to the increasing costs of City fees. She stated her property meets City codes and does not require return trips during rental inspections; therefore she should not need to pay the high fee.

**Stanley Potteiger, of Green Street**, agreed with the previous speakers about modifying laws and regulations to make them more reasonable and less punitive. He also noted the challenge of paying his City and County property taxes, which are now bundled. He also expressed the belief that the water fees are escalating because the Water Authority needs to financially assist the City.

**Steve Suruski, of Sinking Spring**, stated that he is a rental property owner who is ready to close down his investment properties due to the high fees. He stated that he owns 50 properties and they are headed in the wrong direction due to the escalating City fees. He also expressed the belief that having Codes Inspectors call property owners to alert them to maintenance issues worked better than the ticketing system. He expressed the belief that Codes Inspectors are given quotas on the number of tickets they need to issue each day.

Mr. Suruski was given one additional minute to comment.

Mr. Suruski expressed the belief that the rental inspection fees need to be reduced. He also suggested issuing Quality of Life tickets to the tenants, not to the landlords.

**Tammie Neiheiser, of Cotton Street**, declined her opportunity to comment.

**Maryann Ciarlone, of North 5<sup>th</sup> Street**, read Council an article from a publication regarding the refusal of tenants and landlords to allow Codes to inspect the interior of properties due to the constitutional rights of tenants and landlords. She read the article which described the case and the Court's decision. She asked Council to consider the parallel with the issue in Reading.

**Kelly Fegley, of South 16<sup>th</sup> Street**, stated that she is a crossing guard at 17<sup>th</sup> and Haak Street. She stated that the crossing guards have not had pay increases for many years and only earn minimum wage. She noted the dangers of the job, as some guards are posted at intersections

without stop signs. She stated that crossing guards elsewhere earn between \$10-15 an hour.

## **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA & MINUTES**

Council President Acosta called Council's attention to the minutes for the September 10<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting of Council and the agenda for this meeting, including the legislation under the Consent agenda heading.

**Councilor Marmarou moved, seconded by Councilor Sterner, to approve the minutes from the September 10<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting of Council and the agenda, including the legislation under the Consent Agenda heading. The motion was approved unanimously.**

## **Consent Agenda**

**A. Award of Contract** - to Brice Excavating LLC, 1896 Friedensburg Road, Reading, PA 19606, at a total submitted bid price of \$32,500.00 for the Schuylkill River Bike Trail Clearance Project (**Purchasing**)

**B. Award of Contract** - to Land Tech Enterprises, 3084B Bristol Road, Warrington, PA 18976, at a total submitted bid price of \$291,743.00 for various improvements to the 11<sup>th</sup> and Pike Playground (**Purchasing**)

## **ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT**

Managing Director Snyder read the report distributed to Council by the Mayor's Office on Thursday. She highlighted as follows:

- Described the moving 9/11 Ceremony at City Park
- Congratulated the firefighters recognized for their courage and bravery
- Described the assistance of local faith leaders with the criminal issues at the High School and Intermediate High School

Mayor Spencer arrived and updated Council about his activities over the past week.

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz commended the IT Division for their updated City website. She noted that photos of the Pagoda are obviously missing and requested that photos of this City icon be added to the site. She also suggested that the Administration work with Council and other organizations to develop a strategic plan to address juvenile violence in a comprehensive manner.

## **AUDITOR'S REPORT**

City Auditor Cituk read the report distributed to Council at the meeting covering the following:

- 2012 Admissions Tax Collection
- 2012 Real Estate Transfer Tax Compensation

- 2012 Recycling Grant
- 2012 State Pension Aide Report
- Resignation of Audit Coordinator Maria Rodriguez

## ORDINANCES FOR FINAL PASSAGE

**A. Ordinance 95-2012** – amending the Codified Ordinances Chapter 15, Part 8 Impoundment and Booting of Vehicles authorizing the immediate removal of vehicles that have been booted after receiving a minimum of five unsettled parking tickets **(Parking Authority/Council Staff)** *Introduced at the Sept 10 regular meeting*

Councilor Marmarou moved, seconded by Councilor Reed, to enact Bill No. 95-2012.

Bill No. 95-2012 was enacted by the following vote:

Yeas: Corcoran, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Reed, Sterner, Waltman, Acosta,  
President -7  
Nays: None -0

**B. Ordinance 96-2012-** authorizing the Mayor to execute the Memorandum of Understanding between the Reading Berks Association of Realtors and the City of Reading for the creation of the CORE Program within Reading **(Law)** *Introduced at the Sept 10 regular meeting*

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz moved, seconded by Councilor Reed, to enact Bill No. 96-2012.

Councilor Corcoran stated that he will be abstaining from the vote because he is a member of the Reading Berks Association of Realtors and a member of the CORE Committee.

Bill No. 96-2012 was enacted by the following vote:

Yeas: Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Reed, Sterner, Waltman, Acosta, President  
-6  
Nays: None -0  
Abstention – Corcoran - 1

**C. Ordinance 97-2012** – transferring funds from contingency account as follows: \$100,000 to the Reading Redevelopment Authority for blighted properties entering the CORE process and \$5,000 for Reading Beautification supporting the city-wide clean-ups. **(Council Staff & Business Analyst)** *Introduced at the Sept 10 regular meeting*

Councilor Marmarou moved, seconded by Councilor Corcoran, to enact Bill No. 97-2012.

Bill No. 97-2012 was enacted by the following vote:

Yeas: Corcoran, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Reed, Sterner, Waltman, Acosta,  
President -7

Nays: None -0

## INTRODUCTION OF NEW ORDINANCES

Council President Acosta read the following ordinances into the record:

**A. Ordinance** - amending Chapter 1, Administration, of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Reading, the Capital Improvement Program and renumbering as required (**Council Staff/PFM**)

**B. Ordinance** - amending the 2012 City of Reading Self Insurance Fund budget by authorizing the transfer of funds from line items within the Self Insurance Fund Budget (**Human Resources**)

**C. Ordinance** – authorizing the transfer of funds collected during the recent Tax Amnesty to the Non-Departmental Contingency Account (**Business Analyst**)

**D. Ordinance** - authorizing the transfer of funds to the Human Relations Commission for Emergency Shelter Grants in 2012 (**Business Analyst**)

**E. Ordinance** - amending the 2012 General Fund Budget, reallocating funds from the Contingency Fund to Law Department Budget Codified Ordinance line items for Legal Services and/or Contracted Services (**Law**)

## RESOLUTIONS

**A. Resolution 111-2012** – authorizing the Mayor to create a Microloan Program for small businesses (**Community Development**)

**Councilor Marmarou moved, seconded by Councilor Corcoran, to enact Resolution No. 111-2012.**

Council President Acosta questioned the entity that would be underwriting and approving these loans. He also inquired about the maximum amount that could be loaned.

Mayor Spencer stated that the CD Director would be handling the loans; however, he did not know how the underwriting would be done or the maximum amount of the loans. He stated that the loan funding will come from the CDBG Funds.

**Councilor Reed moved, seconded by Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz, to table Resolution 111-2012.**

**Resolution No. 111-2012 was tabled by the following vote:**

**Yeas: Corcoran, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Reed, Waltman, Acosta, President -5**

**Nays: Marmarou, Sterner - 2**

## **COUNCIL COMMENT**

Councilor Sterner congratulated those honored with commendations tonight and thanked those who commented during the public comment period. He thanked those speaking about the City's fees for sharing their opinions.

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz congratulated those honored tonight and thanked those who spoke. She highlighted an article on the Duryea Hill Climb.

Councilor Corcoran thanked Berks Packing for their volunteer work to beautify the Bingaman Street Bridge triangle.

Councilor Reed saluted Big John Ulrich on his retirement and noted his quiet philanthropy endeavors to benefit the community. She noted the need for the City Administration and Council to work proactively to address the downtown, rather than taking no action.

Councilor Reed stated that the Mayor recently removed John Darlington and Jack Lantrip from the Parking Authority Board, suddenly and without warning or cause. She noted the work of Larry Lee, as Executive Director for the past 10 years, which turned the Parking Authority into a successful operation.

Mayor Spencer expressed the belief that parking downtown is not the largest problem. He stated that the down economy plays more of a factor on the health of businesses. He stated that his staff is working on a comprehensive parking plan for the downtown, which will be presented to Council.

Managing Director Snyder stated that the rental inspection fees are currently under review. She expressed the belief that the fees will be adjusted to prevent the good landlords from subsidizing the landlords who require multiple inspections to bring their properties into compliance with the City's Property Maintenance Code.

Councilor Waltman noted the need for Council and the Administration to create a parking solution. He stated that a variety of issues affect the health of businesses, not parking or the

down economy alone.

Council President Acosta noted the successful faith event held at George Field over the past weekend "Say No to Violence".

Councilor Acosta reviewed the meeting schedule.

**Councilor Marmarou moved, seconded by Councilor Reed, to adjourn the regular meeting of Council.**

*Respectfully submitted by Linda A. Kelleher CMC, City Clerk*